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# REMARKS

ON

# *MR. COLMAN'S PREFACE;*

——Rixator, de lanâ——caprinâ,
Propugnat, nugis armatus. *Horace.*

ALSO A

## SUMMARY COMPARISON

OF THE PLAY OF THE

# IRON CHEST

WITH THE NOVEL OF

## *CALEB WILLIAMS.*

Sic parva licet componere magnis. *Virgil.*

ORIGINALLY WRITTEN FOR, AND INSERTED IN,

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# ADVERTISEMENT.

THE author of these slight *remarks* is aware that there is little excuse to be made for appearing abruptly and carelessly before the public; he claims, therefore, no other indulgence than that which has usually been granted to such as exercise their pens on subjects of a *temporary nature*.

Mr. Colman has, in a very virulent, and, it is generally thought, ill-advised *preface*, endeavoured to attribute the condemnation of his play of the *Iron Chest* to Mr. KEMBLE.—The author has attempted to clear that GENTLEMAN from the imputation.

The *Comparison* annexed was written immediately after the *first representation* of the play. It appeared to the writer, that Mr. Colman had injudiciously treated his subject, and he was led, for the sake of amusement and curiosity, to ascertain more distinctly the cause of his failure; he has subjoined it, therefore, to the remarks, as a further confirmation of his opinion, that Mr. KEMBLE *is not, in the re-*

*motest degree, accountable for the ill-success of the Iron Chest.*

He would wish, however, to have it understood, that the *political sentiments* in CALEB WILLIAMS have no share in this comparison, either one way or the other. He has looked to the characters and incidents of the novel, purely as characters and incidents susceptible of DRAMATIC *application* and *effect*.

Should there be any inclination to condemn the writer for *want of candour*, he would beg leave to refer the reader to the *preface* of Mr. COLMAN, and trusts he should immediately stand excused, for an expression or two bordering on harshness or incivility.

*September* 1, 1796.

# REMARKS
ON
# Mr. COLMAN's PREFACE
TO THE
# *IRON CHEST.*

To the irritability of authors much is allowed; we know how apt they are to quarrel with the decisions of an audience, and we grant them the occasional indulgence of softening the asperities of their chagrin by animadversion and complaint; but, to splenetic effusion there should be some boundary. If a man writes a bad play, let him do all he can to make it a good one, or to make the public *think* it a good one, which is the same thing; but PERSONAL ABUSE is not among the privileges of irascible dramatists.

Since the publication of Smollet's tragedy of the *Regicide*, we have had nothing like the present preface of Mr. Colman; but, all the accusations of Smollet were impotent and stingless, because no *reader* of the play could condemn the manager for refusing to *act* it: just so it is in the present instance; no one can attribute the condemnation of the Iron Chest to Mr. Kemble, since the bare perusal of the *character* he had to sustain will convince him that the finest actor that ever trod the stage, by the most powerful exertions of his talents, could

never produce, from such a subject, any dramatic effects on the minds of an audience:—besides it need not be told to any person conversant with the affairs of the stage, that the mal-performance of any *one* character, however prominent and important, could be the means of damning a play *so completely as the Iron Cheſt was damned.* SIR EDWARD MORTIMER, whatever the author, in the vanity of his heart, may think, was not the only opiate in the piece. *Adam Winterton* is, perhaps, a paragon of prolixity and dullness; and I appeal to every auditor on the first night, whether the general disposition to somnolency were not manifested previous even to the *appearance* of Mortimer. *Helen* is another character which acted as a *torpedo* on the audience. It will not be said that the dullness of Mr. Kemble in Mortimer prevented Miss Farren from striking out any vivid effects from her part, if the part had been competent to yield them; nor will it be said that Mr. Kemble was accountable for all the trash which was put into the mouths of *Samson* and *Blanche*, not to mention those dreadful incitations to languor—*Fitzharding*, *Armstrong*, *Orson*, and *Iudith*. Mr. Colman thinks if Mr. Bannister, jun. would speak out, he would attribute his own ill success to the slovenly acting of his companion. I will be bold to affirm that if Mr. Bannister were to speak out, he would say, he never played a part, written expressly for his powers, so remote from all

likelihood to catch the interest and applause of the audience as the character of *Wilford*. I am sure he never *attempted* to do so much, and *effected* so little, in the course of my attendance on theatrical representations.

As to the complaint of Mr. Colman that the REHEARSALS of the piece were imperfect,—it is probable they were,—but that imperfection in the present instance can neither add to nor deduce from the merits of the play. It is from *effects* we are to judge, and not from the peevish assertions of a disappointed author. This then will be the opinion of every person present at the acting of this miserable play; that, instead of there being any appearance of imperfect study or inattentive management, the performance was, for a first night, unusually correct; that the stage business was conducted with precision and dispatch; that in point of dresses, scenery, and machinery, no author was ever more liberally assisted; and, perhaps, an audience more candid, more disposed to applaud every thing that bore the least shadow of merit, and to remit their disapprobation of what was offensive and absurd, was never assembled before the scenic curtain: their forbearance was absolutely exemplary, till all human patience was exhausted, and they were compelled to issue that award which a British audience never issues without reluctance and regret.

But, if the rehearsals were imperfect, whose was

the fault?—Undoubtedly *his* who sent his drama *piece-meal* to the theatre. Mr. Colman will never dare tell the public that the manager of Drury-Lane theatre required that he should transmit his play by *bits* and *scraps*, as the printer received his preface. Did the author then imagine, that the public were so fascinated by the superior brilliancy of his writings, that they could not brook the cruel delay of a few months, but were eager to foster his literary *whelp*, before he had licked it into *shape* and *frame*? Who called for the unconcocted materials of his *chest*?—Who expressed any desire that this *wonderful* GENIUS should scatter his beggarly *morsels* among them? I recollect no summons from the public, no SPECIAL MANDAMUS, requiring Mr. Colman's "haste, post haste appearance, even on the instant," before them; and I am inclined to suspect that they would utter no sort of complaint if he were never to set pen to paper again. Mr. Colman, poor weak man! mistook the secret whisperings of his own inordinate *vanity*, for the consentient vociferation of the public; and so, that they should not "their free hours languish out," up he starts, big with the imaginings of pride and affectation, and hastens, *velocior pegaso*, to satisfy the suppositious cravings of popular desire; but *non omnia eveniunt quæ in animo statueris*; he finds, too late, that he had been the dupe of his own *conceit*. Instead of favour, congratulation, and applause, he

meets with disgrace, repulse, and eventual DAMNATION. Yet, even after this, has this mawkish *dandeprat* of an author the unparalleled audacity to elevate himself above his more diffident brethren, whose productions he stigmatizes with the appellation of "*mere linings for chests*," while his *Iron Chest*, he says, "will be found to hold together, and to be fit for all the purposes for which it was intended." In another place he styles his brother bards "Parnassian *Sans Culottes*;" and accuses them, on account of the largeness of the sum he was to receive for his labours, of having "been vapidly industrious to level to the muddy surface of their own Castalian ditch, so *aristocratico-dramatick* a bargainer!!!" Is this to be matched in the records of pride and impertinent self-sufficiency?—Here is a man, rising Phœnix-like out of the ashes of his own *disgrace*, and calling on the world to bind the garland of bays round his head, for that he is the *Dieu de la chanson*, and none can sing like him!—that he alone has attained the summit of Parnassus, while his poor stupid competitors are floundering in the ditch at the bottom!!!—

"Oh! I'd have such a fellow *whipt* for o'erdoing termagant."

Another word or two for Mr. Kemble. Mr. Colman quarrels with him for taking *Opium Pills*, previous to the representation of the Iron Chest; and to that circumstance attributes much of the ill-

success of the play. But let Mr. Colman ask of his physician what are the immediate effects of opium?—he will be told, that it makes a man *cheerful*, excites him to enterprize;—that it's action is analogous to *wine*. The Turks, it is said, usually took a quantity of it when they went to battle, and Mr. Erſkine never enters on an address of any importance without it—and will it therefore be urged that the former became sluggish and inactive in the *field*, and that the latter *sets the jury asleep?* the conclusion would be preposterous.—That Mr. Kemble should want spirits, I am not in the leaſt surprised; he had a *heart-breaking* prospect before him—he knew he had to travel *up-hill* all night—he knew also he had a *ponderous load* to sustain—nothing less than the whole weight of the *Iron Chest*, and he had recourse to opium that he might not *sink* under the pressure.

Mr. Kemble is likewise blamed for "suffering the piece to be produced, *uncut*, to "drag its slow length along:" but who that is apprized of the tenaciousness of an author, would venture to alter his play? Curtailment is not effected without excluding certain passages, sometimes certain characters, and often whole scenes; and the parts which a manager would *exclude* might probably be the *darling favourites* of the writer, and which he would not have out of his piece for the world. If Kemble had dared to *cut*, as Mr. Colman calls it,

it is probable he would have cut out *his own character entirely*; and then what would have been the cry? Why, that the manager had damned his play, by omitting the best parts of it.—Mr. Colman himself has authorized this conjecture; for he tells us, that when his consent was requested to a mere *transposition* only, *he would not listen* to the proposal; and yet no one who has any acquaintance with the thing will urge that a transposition could affect the *plot*, or ruin the *interest*, because he must be convinced there was neither one nor the other in the production.

But there is another circumstance in the conduct of Mr. Kemble, on the first night, which, notwithstanding the interpretation Mr. Colman has been pleased to give it, entitles him to the gratitude of that gentleman. The simple fact is this:

At the commencement of the third act the audience began to manifest symptoms of very strong and alarming displeasure. It took place in the *scene* between *Helen* and *Sir Edward Mortimer*;—a scene it will be recollected altogether extraneous and inconceivably dull. On the appearance of Adam Winterton, a character very obnoxious to the house from the beginning, the disapprobation increased; Mr. Kemble then came forward, and as near as I recollect, these were the words he uttered.

" Ladies and Gentlemen,

" I cannot but be sensible that I am the unhappy cause of much of the disapprobation."—

Here the audience interrupted him, and from all quarters arose the cry of

" No, No, Mr. Kemble, you are not the cause —It is not your fault."

Nothing surely could be more decisive than *this*, nor can any thing reflect greater honour on the actor who was willing, *against the sense of the house*, to impute to himself the dullness, which belonged of right to the author.

Mr. Kemble proceeded—

" I hope, Ladies and Gentlemen, on a future night, to be able better to explain the author's design, and afford you a better opportunity of deciding on his merits."

Oh, but, says Mr. Colman, this was a *scurvy trick* —a kind of *salvo*, to skreen him from popular indignation, which he expected I should excite against him!—this was *ostentatious humility*, a mere act of *managerical policy*.

*Policy!* to be sure, it was, and a sort of policy for which he should be eternally obliged to him— *any port in a storm*. The opinion of the house was too unequivocally expressed to be mistaken, and if Mr. Kemble (I care not with what *motive*—that is perfectly immaterial) had not then come forward with his well-timed address, the managers could

never have presumed so far to fly in the face of the public as to invite them a *second time* to an entertainment which they had already so decidedly rejected.

What then are we to infer from this?—That Mr. Kemble, by this scurvy trick, this piece of ostentatious humility, this *selfish* policy, this *interested* appeal to the clemency of the audience, damned Mr. Colman's play? Unquestionably not. I think he *saved* the play, that is, as far as a play, radically dull and defective, could *be saved*—he obtained for it ANOTHER HEARING. I was present on the second night, when the part of Adam Winterton was entirely omitted, and other alterations had been made: When Mr. Kemble too was NOT ill, and when he played *Sir Edward Mortimer* as well as it was possible to play *such a part*. What was its reception then, in its improved state? Simply this—almost every character was hissed throughout, *but the character which Mr. Kemble sustained*. No author, even in the unconscionableness of literary vanity, could expect any further attention to a piece in this state; but Mr. Colman experienced unusual indulgence. The managers seemed determined to give him a fair trial. It was acted twice after this, *to the loss of the house*, and withdrawn, BECAUSE NOBODY WOULD COME TO SEE IT. But Mr. Colman complains of ill-treatment—this, gentle reader, was the ill-treatment he received—he got THREE HUNDRED POUNDS for a play not worth a *halfpenny*.

To all that load of vulgarity and abuse which Mr. Colman has unsparingly cast on the *professional* merits of Mr. Kemble, it would be folly to reply.—The talents of that great actor were acknowledged and admired by the public, before they knew there was any such being as George Colman the *younger*; and they who have *seen* the last mentioned gentleman, need no further *memento* to be convinced that, on the score of POLICY, at least, he should have refrained from all *personal* ridicule; the "retort courteous" is here so obvious and easy, that one would have thought a bare glance at his looking-glass, would have been sufficient to prevent any satirical allusion to the cast of a man's countenance, or the formation of his limbs; but such is the medium through which we see *our own* defects, that beauty and deformity are liable to perpetual transposition. If every man were his own painter, an ugly picture would never be exhibited. Thus Mr. Colman describes Kemble as

> "Of a tall stature, and of sable hue,
> "Much like the son of Kish, that lofty Jew."

Now it never occurred to him that the hue of his own face was something similar to this description; and he would probably wonder at that female's insensibility to the charms of manly beauty, who were to say he looked at all *like a Jew*.

I have no doubt in the world, and Mr. Kemble, who knows the modesty of his *panegyrist* as well as

I do, will have no doubt also, that Mr. Colman, were he to describe *himself*, would do it in something like these words:

" See what a grace is seated on this brow,
Hyperion's curls; the front of Jove himself;
An eye like Mars, to threaten and command;
A station like the herald Mercury,
New lighted on a heaven-kissing hill;
A combination and a form indeed
Where every god has seem'd to set his seal,
To give the world assurance of a MAN."

Whereas he is known to be a little, priggish, dusky man, or as Shakspere ludicrously observes,

" A glass-gazing, superserviceable, finical knave"

that looks, at all events, as much like a *son of Kish* as Kemble, excepting that his stature is very *low*; but as to complexion,

" If that it any colour has, I ween
" 'Tis much betwixt an *olive* and a *green*."

*Stultus stulta loquitur*—the man who avows himself to be superior to every modern dramatist, may easily think himself equal to any of the ancients.—When, therefore, Mr. Colman compares his own bald lines to the *curse in King Lear*, one is no longer astonished at his presumption, but, we immediately consider it among those acts of folly which originate in downright IDIOCY;—here he ceases to excite our *contempt*, and, like every other poor deranged object, takes irresistible hold on our *pity*.

I shall just make a quotation or two from this

preface, that the reader may judge whether or no Mr. Colman speaks *truth* when he says, "I mean no allusion, no epithet, to apply to him (Mr. Kemble) as a *private individual.*

"I am too callous now to be annoyed by those innumerable gnats and insects who daily dart their impotent stings on the literary traveller; and too knowing to dismount and waste my time in whipping grasshoppers: but here is a *scowling, sullen, black Bull,* right athwart my road; a *monster of magnitude, of the Bœotian breed,* perplexing me in my wanderings through the entangled labyrinth of Drury!—he stands sulkily before me, with sides seemingly impenetrable to any lash, and tougher than the *dun cow of Warwick!* his front outfronting the *brazen Bull of Perillus!* He has bellowed, gentlemen! yea, he hath bellowed a dismal sound! a hollow unvaried tone, heaved from his very midriff, and striking the listener with torpor! Would I could pass the animal quietly, for my own sake! and, for his, by Jupiter! I repeat it, I would not harm the *Bull.*—I delight not in baiting him. I would jog as gently by him as by the *Ass* that grazes on the common; but he has obstinately blocked up my way. He has already tossed and gored me severely. I must make an effort, or he batters me down, and leaves me to bite the dust."

"Mr. Kemble is a paragon-representative of the *Lusus Naturæ:* and were Mr. Kemble sewed up in

a skin, to act a *hog in a pantomime*, he would act a hog with six legs better than a hog with four."

" One third of the play, only, was yet performed; and I was, now, to make up my mind, like an unfortunate traveller, to pursue my painful journey, through two stages more, upon a *broken down poster*, on whose back lay all the baggage for my expedition. Miserably, and most heavily in hand did the poster proceed! He *groaned*, he *lagged*, he *coughed*, he *winced*, he *wheezed!* never was seen so *sorry a jade*."

" *Frogs in a marsh, flies in a bottle, wind in a crevice, a preacher in a field, the drone of a bagpipe*, all, all yielded to the inimitable and soporific monotony of Mr. Kemble."

Mr. Colman says he has written this preface *currente calamo;* what then kept the press standing several months after the play was composed?—why the *preface:* and how happened it that the preface was not sent to the printer *collectively* and *at once?* why, because it was written *piece-meal*, like the play. The ideas were committed to paper, not as they spontaneously arose in the mind of the author; but, as they were elaborated by study, or suggested by casualty; invention has evidently been *racked* for terms of abuse, which delay has rendered ineffectual. They are not now to be considered as the flashes of *sudden anger*, following with excuseable rapidity, the conviction of palpable injury, but as

the eruptions of long dormant malignity, deduced from their confinement by the brisk circulation of the glass, or during the exacerbations of splenetic remembrance: there has been something *rankling* in the mind.

Manet altâ mente repostum.

It is surely mean enough (to use no harsher epithet) to wait till the *back of a man is turned* before we *strike the blow*, but it is *meaner* still to tell him, when he looks round for the assailant, that we did not intend to *wound* him. The policy of refraining to tell an individual what we think of him till he is *out of hearing*, is another meanness which I cannot think consistent with the honest indignation of an injured spirit, or the ingenuous manliness of public accusation.

Mr. Colman possesses as undoubted a right, I allow, "to discuss the merits or demerits of Mr. Kemble in his public capacities of manager and actor," as I or any other man to discuss the literary merits or demerits of Mr. Colman; yet, I cannot but think that the *time* and *manner* of such discussion might have been selected to better advantage in every respect than they were; there is something so equivocal, so paltry, so contrary to the usual practices of life, and to the general expectations of men on such occasions, in reserving a publication, charged with the grossest *personalities*, till the object of animadversion and abuse *has departed*

*out of the kingdom*, in order to fulfil his professional engagements, that one can scarcely admit the assertion of Mr. Colman at the close of his preface, namely, that he has been solely swayed by the object of "guarding his own reputation."

A

# SUMMARY COMPARISON

OF THE PLAY OF THE

# IRON CHEST.

WITH THE NOVEL OF

## CALEB WILLIAMS.

To a dramatic author who knows not how to select with taste and arrange with judgment, a *novel* is a dangerous resource. It is no easy matter so to introduce the characters and connect the incidents as that nothing that was necessary to be preserved should appear to have been omitted, and nothing retained which might readily have been spared. It requires, indeed, no extraordinary comprehension of intellect to discover the incidents of a novel which may be dramatically applied; but to concatenate them in one chain of uninterrupted regularity; to make each the natural result of the foregoing, or the preparatory introduction to that which succeeds; to explain the characters with brevity, and yet with sufficiency; to epitomize, in short, or abstract the leading events of the novel with ingenuity and effect—*hic labor, hoc opus est!*

I shall not attempt to ascertain how far Mr. Colman has fallen short of the design of Mr. Godwin, but in what particular instances he has failed in explaining it, and why the characters which in-

terest so forcibly in the novel are so feeble and inefficient in the play.

It has been observed by a very acute critic in one of the morning papers, * that Mr. Colman has mistaken the source of the compunction of Falkland, which he has imagined to proceed from the murder of Tyrrell; instead of the execution of the innocent Hawkinses. That Falkland ever regretted for a moment his murder of Tyrrell is not to be supposed. —Nothing but assassination could have satisfied his high sense of honour; the notions of chivalry he imbibed in Italy had taught him the lesson, that on some occasions to oppose his person to a man who had greatly wronged him was to degrade his character; that the *stiletto* and the *sword* demanded two different victims, and that public disgrace could only be wiped away by assassination. To a man of these principles it would be a rational supposition, that the recollection of Tyrrell's murder, instead of furnishing food for remorse, would afford him a sort of gloomy satisfaction, even in those hours when his mind was most agonized with the pungency of opposite feelings.

Mr. Godwin was no doubt sensible of the difficulty of making Falkland as interesting to the reader as probably he appeared to his own imagination; this is evident from the elaboration with which he has introduced his character;—he has,

* The Oracle.

therefore, been obliged to inform the reader, by amplification, of what he could not do abstractedly;—in the first volume he appears an object of admiration, in the second of pity, and in the third of pity and terror combined. The author was conscious that, to explain a character like this, no hasty delineation could suffice; he has, consequently, endeavoured a gradual *devêlope*, by artful colouring, minute discrimination, subtle disquisition, and philosophical inquiry, ratiocinating and refining, till at length he has worked him into that being of gigantic mind and influence, which makes him at once interesting and formidable.

The Sir Edward Mortimer of Colman is a creature of a different kind. For want of the necessary palliatives which are so ingeniously contrived in the novel, the murder he has committed appears to be the result of a dastardly malignity—his oppression of Wilford, of tyrannical caprice—his remorse is despicable, and his penitence ludicrous—instead of *pity*, he excites contempt; and instead of *terror*, merriment. In the novel, we are led on *by degrees* to admire a character who interests by his peculiar perplexities, conciliates by his benevolence, awes by the weight of his talents, and alarms by the formidableness of his power. In the play, we are introduced *at once* to a murderer without a plea to justify his crime; a moody *solitaire*, who croaks about the loss of honour, which it does not appear he ever possessed:

a trembling coward, who dreads rather the infliction of punishment, than the entailment of ignominy.

There never was a *copy* perhaps so miserably varied from its *original* as this; whether it has proceeded from want of conception, or want of skill, or both, I will not pretend to determine; but surely there can be no stronger instance of consummate ignorance, or of corrupted taste.

If Mr. Colman *meant* to follow his author, I must impute his perversions to the former: if he did not, they proceed most indubitably from the latter. If Falkland valued HONOUR more than *life*—if it had been his care not only to preserve the good opinion of the world, while he *lived*, but their undiminished respect when he was *dead*—would he have been mad enough to draw up a narrative of the murder of Tyrrel, which *must* have been read *immediately after his decease?*—for if his motive in writing it was to clear his fame, his intention to destroy it is paradoxical and absurd. Would he have exerted himself so indefatigably to secure the silence of *Caleb Williams*, the only person who was entrusted with the secret, merely that he might have the pleasure of relating it to the world in a posthumous pamphlet HIMSELF? Certainly NOT will be the answer of every man who has read the *novel*.

Would Sir Edward Mortimer, who himself transferred the jewels, [from the chest it must be ima-

gined] into the box of Wilford, have been so blind as to convey with them a bundle of papers that detailed his own infamy, accompanied by the very knife which dealt the fatal wound? Certainly NOT will be the answer of every man who has seen the *play*. The blunder could not have been committed through *agitation*, for he sits down immediately after to deliver a cool sophistical accusation against a man he knew to be innocent, and who knew the accuser to be guilty.

Mr. Godwin says nothing about the *contents* of the chest. It was necessary to interest the reader in the early part of his novel, and this he does most powerfully, by raising his expectation to a pitch of extraordinary suspense. Why he forbore to gratify the curiosity he raised, it remains with him to say. In our opinion, it is a *master-stroke* of the writer to fix the reader's attention more strongly to the character of Falkland.

With respect to the character of CALEB WILLIAMS, dramatized by Mr. Colman, under the name of *Wilford*, I shall just observe that the same injudicious treatment, though in a less degree, operates to the disadvantage of *his* appearance on the stage. Mr. Godwin has represented him as a character unconquerably inquisitive indeed, but a thousand circumstances are introduced first to awaken, and then to heighten his curiosity. He is hurried on by a multiplicity of little incidents,

all combining to justify his suspicions of the guilt of his master, to that breach of confidence which is the source of all his misfortunes.

What reader does not feel the same anxiety as Caleb, to know what is contained in the chest? One cannot suppose it possible, so powerful is the ingenuity of the author, that under such circumstances, any human being could forego the satisfaction of gratifying his curiosity, and at the same time of terminating his doubts. His was not the curiosity of wantonness, but an irresistible impulse, which drove him on to an involuntary, because an inevitable, act.

The curiosity of Wilford is *wanton* and *indecent*; he hears in one scene that *there is a secret*, and in the next, like both a fool and a madman, proceeds to open his master's chest; what cause he has, in the first place, to suspect Sir Edward of having committed murder, and in the next, to imagine the chest should contain any thing to establish his guilt, we are not told: for the want of this information, we feel no more anxiety when Wilford proceeds to open the chest, than if he were a sugar-toothed boy, watching his opportunity to filch some of mama's prohibited *sweetmeats*. We know, however, he is doing a mean action, and if Sir Edward were to shoot him in the first paroxysm of his rage, he would fall an unpitied victim to his own wilful and unwarrantable impertinence.

Such is the difference between the novel and the play. Godwin artfully prepares us for certain events by a train of minute, though necessary combinations, producing the most awful and alarming effects. Colman thinks of producing the effects without the trouble of *preparation*; he tears characters and incidents from the novel, because he found them there, without once considering that actions are to be estimated by the motives that generate them; that the principles and habits of men are different in different countries; and that, of course, what is honour, courage, or justice with some, is disgrace, cowardice, and oppression with others.

The comparison I have thus made between the two principal characters of the play and the novel might be carried on with all the others, but to multiply instances would be to no purpose: if I have succeeded so far, I need go no farther; and if I have hitherto failed, I should fail most indisputably to the end.

# APPENDIX.

THE Iron Chest has been more successful at the Little Theatre in the Haymarket than it was at Drury Lane; but that its intrinsic merits are in the least enhanced by that circumstance, I deny. I knew it would be the case whenever Mr. Colman should think proper to bring it out at his own house, because I knew when a manager had an *object in view* he possessed the *means* of carrying it *against the world.* The means I allude to are well known. When a company are invited to supper it is not expected they should find fault with their entertainment; they must take what is set before them, whether suited to their palate or no:—the common ceremonies of life forbid them to murmur. At a tavern they *pay* for their provision, and call for *what they like.* I was present at this revival, and must confess I never heard such rapturous applause; such congratulatory uproar, and acclamation: but I suspected immediately the sincerity of these extravagant acknowledgements, and recurred to the lines of Pope:

> "All fame is foreign, but of *true desert*;
> Plays round the head, but comes not to the heart.
> One self-approving hour whole years outweighs,
> Of *stupid starers*, and of *loud buzzas!*"

Mr. Colman had no common incitements to make him attempt this revival.—To redeem his lost fame

—to gratify his malignity—to impose on the public a belief that all he had said in his preface was true, and that Mr. Kemble had really been the bane of his production, it required that the play should be again acted, and should *succeed*; but there are many circumstances superadded to the resource above alluded to, which will *account* for this success;—and these are some of them:

Mr. ELLISTON is a very young actor, yet new to the London stage; and a British audience will never let a clever young man, scarcely familiarized to their view, go without due encouragement. For the talents of that gentleman I have the utmost respect—I have more than respect for them—I admire them.—I think he has more of GENIUS, more of what is cantingly called *inspiration*, than almost any actor on our boards, and shall be greatly disappointed indeed, if he do not stand at the head of his profession in a very ſhort time; but in common life, as well as in dramatic life, there is a vast dependency on *circumstance*. We should *not* applaud Mr. Kemble, where possibly we *should* applaud Mr. Elliston because we *know* Mr. Kemble to be the finest performer in the kingdom, and we look for great acting at his hands: he does not *surprise* us, because he does not go *beyond our expectation*; Mr. Elliston *does* surprise us, because we

yet know little of his capacity, and when he makes a brilliant point, we *testify our astonishment* in such a manner as to make him understand we did not *expect* it. This alone was sufficient to save Mr. Colman's play; and I have no doubt but he is indebted to Mr. Elliston for much of his success; yet it will not therefore be said, that Mr. Kemble damned the IRON CHEST before, or that Mr. Elliston plays the character of *Sir Edward Mortimer* better than Mr. Kemble—I know that neither one nor the other is the case.

Mr. FAWCETT contributed also to the success of the play; because Fawcett is a more vigorous actor than Dodd, and has an extraordinary fund of rich, though coarse humour, on which he can draw *ad libitum*. One actor also is in the *zenith* of his popularity, and the other has been some time on the *decline*; but, yet, let every man have his due. Notwithstanding this, I do not think Fawcett played the part of Old Winterton with so much *truth* as Dodd.

The omission of a long scene at the beginning of the third act, which occupies *thirteen pages* in the printed play, is another advantage which Kemble had NOT.

But, there is still another circumstance to be considered as greatly favouring the reception of this play, and that I take to be the strongest that can be alledged.

At Covent-Garden and Drury-Lane we expect a play that will inform the *mind:* at the Haymarket we seek only the gratification of the *eye* and *ear.* We go to the former to be *instructed* as well as *amused,* to the latter only to *idle away time.* The productions of Mr. Colman, on this account, have never been favourably received at the winter-houses. The *Surrender of Calais,* much improved in the cast, was performed at Drury-Lane almost without a hand from beginning to end. The *Mountaineers* never took half the effect there as at the little theatre, though the inimitable acting of Kemble could not but ensure it some degree of success. The *Battle of Hexham* at Covent-Garden was obliged to be laid aside after the second night; and yet HOLMAN played *Gondibert,* Mrs. POPE the *Queen,* and Miss WALLIS *Adeline.*

Mr Colman must have been conscious of the weakness of his play, otherwise he would not have suffered tickets to be issued on its *second representation,* by the underlings of the theatre. To those who are unacquainted with the *mysteries of management,* it may be necessary to observe, that when there is a prospect of a bad house, on any particular night, it is a common practice to make it what is called a *ticket night*:—Now, a ticket night is something similar to a *waiter's benefit* at Ranelagh, when the public are admitted at *reduced prices.*—

That this was the case on the *second night* of the Iron Chest I am very well assured:—pit tickets were hawked at the door at half a crown, and box tickets at four shillings each.—The same plan might have been adopted on the *first*, for ought I know to the contrary.

It is probable that the *Iron Chest* will be acted every night 'till the end of the season; but what then?—the play is no better on that account:—the public have no where else to go, and even if their dislike of the play kept them at home, is not Mr. Colman the manager? and cannot he act what play he chuses? Emolument is nothing in the scale of vanity when revenge and caprice direct the balance. "What care I," Mr. Colman may say, "whether the public come to my play or no; I can *write orders* in abundance, and I warrant ye, I shall be able to *fill my benches*. It will make Kemble *mad* to hear that it is acted, and I am determined to push it in despite of the public."

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